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Ministry of Community and Social Services

Youth and Recreation Branch

Leaders and Leadership Development Program

Any person is a leader who initiates action, shares information with others, regulates his participation in the group he belongs to, encourages others to contribute, and helps the group to move toward the achievement of its goals.

The worn out phrase "leaders are born — not made" is still sometimes used to exclude people from leadership roles. That kind of statement suggests that leadership of groups belongs to some special class of person. But recent studies in group work and human behaviour indicate that leadership is simply a set of functions that the members of a group perform in order to achieve their objective. In some groups many people are involved in performing these functions; in other groups the job is done by a few individuals or even by a single person.

Leadership is the quality in a person that allows him to help other people to get from where they are to where they want to go. The group leader assists other members of the group to perform functions such as these:

- sharing information, knowledge and ideas
- setting objectives
- identifying common problems
- developing trust
- proposing solutions to problems
- developing strategies for action
- identifying their own attitudes and biases
- developing the potential of each member
- resolving conflict in order to reach goals
- developing creativity

These functions are of two kinds: those that maintain the cohesion and life of the group, and those that help the members complete specific tasks.

Any member can learn the skills needed to become an effective leader in a group. Community groups and organizations have a responsibility to provide opportunities for their members to develop these skills:

- techniques of discussion such as guiding, clarifying and summarizing
- helping to expand awareness in others and in oneself
- developing standards for communication
- encouraging the group to examine the underlying causes of conflict and so resolve it
- administration
- planning programs
- steps to problem-solving

Local and Regional Leadership Training

Groups such as municipal recreation committees and other community organizations not only work for the community, they are also important to the development of individual members. We all learn some of the skills of communication and of democratic decision-making through our membership in such groups.

Any of the groups or agencies of a community might initiate a local or regional leadership development program to train leaders for their own programs or for the whole community. Very often the needs of several agencies will overlap and planning for leadership training can be done co-operatively.

Assistance in planning and developing training programs is available from the Youth and Recreation Consultants located in the regional offices of the Ontario Department of Education. See list attached to Bulletin 17 in this series.

Provincial Training Programs

Everywhere in Ontario there are potential leaders doing community work as volunteers or as employees of organizations or municipal agencies. Others are competent in particular skills and would like to teach their sport, craft or art technique to community groups.

At the provincial level two programs to help Ontario communities provide training opportunities for their leaders are offered by the Youth and Recreation Branch of the Department.

1

Adult Leadership Certificate Program

Candidates who would like to teach, or who are already teaching in informal groups, may enrol in the Provincial Institute for a program of courses in leadership and adult education, as well as in their particular field of interest. Those candidates who are volunteers in community work, or employees in the fields of leisure, recreation or informal education, may enrol in such courses as designing leadership education programs and community development in addition to special areas of learning proposed by the participants.

The courses, in both English and French, are available each year at the Provincial Institute. Candidates for this program are recommended by the Youth and Recreation Consultants in the various regions. These candidates may be:

- interested individuals seeking training, or
- the nominees of agencies such as municipal recreation committees, school boards, or other community organizations.

A certificate is granted by the Department to those who successfully complete a one-week residential session in each of three years.

The criteria used in the selection of candidates for the three-year program are:

- previous training and experience
- leadership potential
- recommendation of the hiring authority in the community
- assessment of the candidate's skill competence by a graduate or other qualified person

2

Leadership Seminars

The program of the seminars offered by the Youth and Recreation Branch is designed to improve the leadership and management skills of potential leaders. Participants are helped to integrate their personal needs with the goals of their organizations and their communities.

The five-day seminars are offered twice each year and provide opportunities to explore such questions as:

- Why do people serve in groups?
- What helps and what hinders group productivity?
- How are decisions really made?
- Do groups use their resources well?
- Can improved leadership and better team action increase the effectiveness of groups?

The leadership seminar is designed for professional, semi-professional and volunteer workers in public and private agencies and organizations. Those invited to apply are consultants, administrators and teachers, recreation directors and recreation department personnel, program directors and leaders in voluntary organizations, social workers, clergy, labour officials, law enforcement agents — in short, people engaged in helping others to change and grow.

Participants must be willing to invest in an intensive learning experience and be concerned for the development of their community. They also need to have prior leadership experiences.

Information about the Leadership Seminars may be obtained from Youth and Recreation Consultants located in the regional offices of the Department of Education.